

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A medical device comprising a push-in bone anchor ~~and substantially encapsulated in a protective cover prior to implantation into bone~~, the cover comprising a brittle mass of biocompatible material, ~~the push-in bone anchor substantially encapsulated in the mass~~, the cover breaking when the anchor is implanted into bone.
2. (canceled).
3. (canceled).
4. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 1, wherein said mass comprises a bioabsorbable material.
5. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable material is selected from the group consisting of cross-linked alginate gel, cross-linked collagen, cross-linked hyaluronic acid hydrogel, polylactic-co-glycolic acid, polylactic acid, polyglycolic acid, polyurethane.
6. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 1, further comprising an antimicrobial material.
7. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 6, wherein said antimicrobial material comprises an antibiotic.
8. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 7, wherein said antibiotic is selected from the group consisting of nafcillin, aminoglycoside, ciprofloxacin, piperacillin/tazobactam, ampicillin/sulbactam, vancomycin, cephalosporin, TMP/SMX, ampicillin, gentamicin, tobramycin, and ciprofloxacin.
9. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 8, wherein said antibiotic is disposed within a bioabsorbable material to form said protective cover.
10. (previously presented) The medical device of claim 8, wherein said antibiotic is applied to at least one surface of said protective cover.

11. (withdrawn) A method of inserting a bone anchor into a bone, comprising:
  - (a) providing a bone anchor;
  - (b) providing a protective cover adapted to encapsulate said bone anchor;
  - (c) encapsulating said bone anchor in said protective cover;
  - (d) locating a bone anchor implantation site on a bone; and
  - (e) causing said bone anchor to penetrate said protective cover and implant in said bone.
12. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein said bone anchor is encapsulated in said protective cover prior to engagement of said bone anchor to an implantation device.
13. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein said bone anchor is encapsulated in said protective cover after engagement of said bone anchor to an implantation device.
14. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein said protective cover for encapsulating a bone anchor comprises a generally ellipsoidal mass.
15. (withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein said mass is substantially deformable.
16. (withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein said mass is substantially brittle.
17. (withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein said mass comprises a bioabsorbable material.
18. (withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein said bioabsorbable material is selected from the group consisting of cross-linked alginated gel, cross-linked collagen, cross-linked hyaluronic acid hydrogel, polylactic-co-glycolic acid, polylactic acid, polyglycolic acid, polyurethane.
19. (withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein said protective cover further comprises an antibiotic.

20. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19, wherein said antibiotic is selected from the group consisting of nafcillin, aminoglycoside, ciprofloxacin, piperacillin/tazobactam, . ampicillin/sulbactam, vancomycin, cephalosporin, TMP/SMX, ampicillin, gentamicin, tobramycin, and ciprofloxacin.
21. (withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein said antibiotic is disposed within said bioabsorbable material to form said cover.
22. (withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein said antibiotic is applied to at least one surface of said protective cover.